

# The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, January 7. 1692. Licens'd, E. B.



We have in our former Papers prov'd the Folly and Impiety of such as pretend to Judicial Astrology, showing that the *Scripture, Reason, and Experience* give their Common Suffrage against it. But since we find Mr. G— (who, for what reasons we know not, is become so famous, or rather infamous, above the rest of his Brethren, in his pretences that way, has at the latter end of his Almanack, for this Year 1693. written a defence of *Judicial Astrology*, we thought it our Duty, (especially having before engaged in the Subject) to show the Nullity and Inconclusiveness of all that looks like material in what he has writ, since it may hinder a deal of Sin and Folly in such Persons as are subject to the Idolatry of running after these sort of Men, at the same time forfeiting their Dependence upon God, and losing their Money and Time, only to be laugh'd at as soon as their back is turn'd. Our Paper being short, we shall only consider the Arguments, and not trouble our selves about other digressions, tho' there's matter enough in the rest for both Pity and Mirth. His first Argument, is p. 2. which we shall collect, like all the following, in its full force, only shorten the Terms, being more pertinent for the business, and with that Justice to him, as he shall have no cause to complain.

*J. G. 1 Arg.* **N**O Sceptick denies Superiors influence Inferiors. Stars and Planets are Superior to all terrene Beings, and must therefore influence them?

*Athen.* We grant, that a Being Superior in Power and Nature can act upon, and influence an Inferior, as a Man can do what he will with his Watch. But as for the Paralogism which would make Superiority in Altitude, or height, and Superior in Nature and Power, to be the same thing, 'tis so absurd, that we need not say we deny it; at this rate every Chimney is more noble than a Man, because 'tis higher, and every Bird that flies over ones head does thereby establish its Dominion over such a Person, which is a Doctrine only fit for *Uraniah's* humble Servant.

*J. G. 2 Arg.* If the order and disorder of terrene Bodies be not owing to the Stars, they seem to stand in need of some other Natural Cause for their Production?

*Athen.* So long as there's Vertue and Vice, Wisdom and Folly in the World, we shall never want a proper Cause of all the Orders and Disorders in it. Besides, in Page 3. about the middle, you say the Air is the Mediate Cause of all things; and if so, not the Stars, as you would here suggest: If you think to have a refuge in the Term Mediate, you are yet in a greater Error; for there was never any of you so silly as to say, the Stars were the immediate Cause of any thing, if so, they would necessitate, not incline: And if they are not the Immediate, then they must be the Mediate (if any;) but that you debarr 'em of too, and give to the Air: So that by your own Doctrine, the Stars have nothing to do with the Orders and Disorders of the World. But after all, who is your Authority for asserting, That all Philosophers allow the Air to be the mediate Cause of all things, when there's not one in the whole World that can be guilty of such a ridiculous thought, it would be very hard to put upon you to prove it the only and proper Cause of any thing at all.

*J. G. 3 Arg.* If the Solum and Calum do both agree in the making up Homers Golden Chain, its obvious that the Sympubies and Antipathies of the Planets and Stars above, with Persons and Things below, do certainly produce the true Sorites of Nature that hold together, (by links as it were) all Mundane Beings?

*Athen.* If Homers Golden Chain made any thing for your Cause, we would give it you, and our Answer to it, but you have wrested Homer to your own purpose, and have put the Stars in Jupiters place, for it was Jupiter himself that held the Golden Chain which reach'd from Heaven to Earth; only denoting thereby his Superintendence, and Regulation of Humane Affairs, and that there nothing fell out on Earth, which was not providentially order'd and regulated, according to the Decrees and Registry of Fate, but not a word of Stars, their influence, or any such thing.

The next Paragraph is built upon the first Argument, where, because the Stars are high and powerful, (the last is to be prov'd) therefore they influence, &c. The next mighty Argument is interrogative, as follows.

*J. G. 4 Arg.* Why may not there be as well Qualifications of Excellency and Peculiarity, in the seven Planets of the greater World, as in the seven principal parts of Man, the lesser World, viz. the Heart, Brain, Liver, Spleen, Gall, Lungs and Kidneys.

*Athen.* A why not proves nothing: We'll grant you Qualifications of Excellency in the Planets, as to their Glory, Height, Motion, &c. but as for the peculiarity and use of 'em, we deny it, (Sun and Moon excepted for influence;) if you had taken in the Earth as a Planet, as Mr. Parker has done, you had mention'd something of Use and Peculiarity. But pray Sir where did you learn your Anatomy, to call those above mention'd the seven principal parts of Mans Body, how came that Number into your Mind? If by principal, you mean essentially so, 'tis false, Experience shows 'tis possible to live without the Spleen; how have some Persons Kidneys been ulcerated whilst living? Others with Lungs almost consum'd; Brain a great part often taken out. Now suppose some of the Planets par'd away piecemeal, and one of 'em lost in the indefinite space, what would become of Astrology then? but let's see how these seven principal parts answer to the Nature of the seven Planets by what follows; at the bottom of p. 6. there you say, The Heart is assimilated to the Sun, the Spleen to Saturn, the parts of delight to Venus, the Brain to the Moon, and the Understanding to Mercury; so that by this, we have now nine principal parts, in the Microcosm Privities, and Understanding added, so that your Question is thus: Why may not the seven Planets in the greater World, answer the nine principal parts in the lesser? We answer, Why should they, there being neither Number, Reason, nor Sense in the Question.

*J. G. 6 Arg.* There can be no better Reason given for the Motions, Order, &c. of the Planets, than that they might thereby influence things below.

*Athen.* We'll lend you a better Reason. Their light is for Mans use, their Number, Order, Configurations, regular Motions, &c. were made for Mans Contemplation, and to put him in Mind of an Intelligent Author of 'em; these are the uses that David and St. Paul make of 'em.

*J. G. 6 Arg.* It must be the Stars that influence us to love and hate, or evenness of Temper, for the Earth, or Atoms can't do it.

*Athen.* We see no reason that it should be either of 'em, and it must be one of 'em, or you argue upon nothing. If your Stars won't furnish you with a better reason, we'll try to oblige you with one. The Passions, as Fear, Hope, Joy, Love, Anger, &c. are innate, and whilst they are in being, are always ready to be work'd upon, the manner is by means of the Senses, which presents us with Objects, or Relations agreeable, disagreeable, surprizing, frightful, joyous, &c. that 'tis this



this not the Stars that makes us glad or sorry, is plain; for take a Person whose Aspects are as good or as ill as you please, suppose the most malevolent for Sorrow, Accidents, &c. and such a Man may at that same time be made to rejoice, if you Confer upon him an Estate, a Preferment, a Pardon, or what he would be most pleas'd with. But you'll Urge, they Incline, not Necessitate, so that their Aspects may be frustrate in many Cases. Suppose it; suppose also there is something of Truth in Astrology, since it is so fallacious as it may be diverted, who can be sure of what you say? or why would ye that People shou'd rely upon you in any Case whatever? If the Art was real, and the Stars did Necessitate, the Case would be quite alter'd. — The next Paragraph is full of Interrogations, which we shall Answer as we go along, distinguishing which is which by the Character of the Letter.

*If the Sun has effect upon Bodies, why may not the Spirits of the other Planets?* *Ans.* We know not what you mean by Spirits of Planets, Explain that first; in the mean time take another Query to compare with yours, viz. Why should not all the Planets incline to Heat and Passion as well as Mars? *Why do Vegetables dye, when the Sun has most Power to preserve Life?* *Ans.* From the same Reason that some Flies never live a whole day, and others live half a year: But Query, Why do any Men dye under good and promising Aspects? either the Stars lye, or signifie nothing in the matter. *Why does one year differ from another in the same time of the year, if the Sun be the only Cause of the Changes and Variations which happen in the Seasons of the year.* We say the Sun by its distance or nearness causes Winter and Summer, the two great Changes; as for lesser Changes, which are only accidental, by reason of Winds bringing more or less Niter (or Nitrous Air) from the Frigid Zone, or the contrary; or by Exhalations, Inundations, Earthquakes, and a multitude more of such things as may Condense or Rarefy, and have other Effects upon the Air, and cause a greater or lesser quantity of Clouds, &c. which may interpose and hinder the Sun from having like Effects at all times. But Query, Why don't the same Aspects, Conjunctions, Oppositions, &c. always produce the same Seasons, Accidents, &c. if they are the proper cause of 'em. All these Questions you see are Convertible, and conclude more against you than us, for we can Answer, and give a known certain Reason, which you can't do.

*J. G. p. 6. Defin. What is the Brain? A Close Compacted Body, it is semblable to Jelly or Flegm, whence by means of the Nerves comes Sensation and Motion.*

*Athen.* Indeed Friend John, if Jelly and Brains be such A close Compacted Body, a thick Skull will be found too close and Compacted for any Mercurial Influence: Now we find indeed that Philosophy, Anatomy and Definitions, if back'd by Propitious Stars, as yours are, will arrive to an uncommon growth at last.

*J. G. Def. 2d. What is the Heart? Only a meer triangular piece of Flesh, of no excellent attraction to Common Vision.*

*Athen.* Acutely defin'd again! only we want to know whether 'tis a Solid or a Plane, but you've made amends in the following learned Phrase, **No excellent attraction to Common Vision.** Before this our Talent cou'd reach no higher than to express it thus, *no pleasant sight*: But now for the Consequence and Design of these Definitions, why

*J. G. The Heart and the Brain (p. 6.) are assimilated to the Sun and Moon, two of the most powerful and influencing Planets, but yet the Flesh is dull and inactive, as the Scripture testifies, 'tis the Spirit that does all and is all.*

*Athen.* This is fairly Collected, and the sense of the whole Page, now if we consider the Parallel, and Mr. G's design by it, he wou'd (as appears above) show that the seven Planets rul'd the greater World, and the seven principal Parts the lesser World, or Man, which seven he afterwards unluckily made out Nine; and now purely to give us a touch of his Divinity, he destroys all he has said, making the Heart and Brain to be flesh, and profit nothing; that is, so far from influencing the lesser World, or Man, that they must be influenc'd themselves

by the Spirit, and consequently from his own Parallel the Sun and Moon (and if them the rest of the Planets) are dull and languid, can't at all influence or incline a Man to any thing of themselves, standing in need of something else to quicken and influence them: *Astrologico* divinely argued! But the Author may be pardon'd, having made his Consequence perhaps under some ill Aspect.

To page 10. he takes all for granted, and upon a blind Presumption takes all that he has said hitherto to be Canon, and so he proceeds to talk like an Astrologer, of Jupiter and Melancholly, Mars and Choller, Venus and good Humour; by and by he falls upon Baptism and Vows, believing Virtue spoils his Trade by falsifying his Schemes, and shows that the Stars are like Whores, p. 8. (Creditable Buinesses to trust to!) and ends with Answering some Objections, which are all of the same Cast; but since he thinks those Objections so easily resolv'd, we'll propose a few more to him and all other Astrologers whatever, which if Answer'd and sent us or our Bookseller, with Name or Names subscrib'd, and Places of Habitation, we'll be so just and fair as to commit it to the Press without any Alterations, but if we receive no Answer the World is hereby desired to take Notice of it, and be no longer abus'd and impos'd upon, by such as are not able by all the help of the Stars to maintain their own Art, or Answer the following Questions.

*Quest. 1. Suppose three Footmen are to run a Race, and being willing to know their Fortune, they come to three different Astrologers all at the same time, and have the same Schemes erected for each: Query, Since one must win and two lose, why will the Astrologers tell 'em an impossibility, that they must all win or all lose?*

*Quest. 2. Why you pretend to tell Masters of great Consequence, as Life and Death, Marry or not, Happy or not, &c. and can't keep your selves from Contradicting one another in the little Concern of Weather, and that the most knowing of you misses oftner than hit, and particularly Mr. J. G. that said it wou'd be Snow the 5th. of this Instant, which was the finest day that has been this Year?*

*Quest. 3. Let a Man from any fix'd standing go towards either East, West, North or South, will you take 3 Guinea's to two, which will be offer'd as often as you please by some of our Society, that you tell towards which Point he went?*

*Quest. 4. There's now as we are very Credibly Inform'd, an Astrologer in Town who is frequently Cuckolded by one of his Friends, can any of you tell by the Rules of Astrology who it is, or who the Person is that thus abuses the poor Astrologer?*

*Quest. 5. Why have you not, and when will you Answer those Questions (instead of defending Judicial Astrology) that we put to you before, when we Treat'd upon this Subject?*

Thus much at present for Astrologers.

*Quest. 6. Pray which do you think to be the best Almanack in England?*

*Ans.* Parker's Almanack is the best that is yet extant perhaps in all Europe.

## Next Monday will be Publish'd

**T**HE second Spira, being a fearful Example of an ATHEIST who had Apostatiz'd from the Christian Religion, and died in Despair at Westminster, Dec. 8. 1692. with an Exact Account of his Sicknes, Convictions, Discourses with Friends and Ministers, and of his dreadful Expressions and Blasphemies when he left the World: As also A Letter from an ATHEIST of his Acquaintance, with his Answer to it. Publish'd for an Example to others, and recommended to all Young Persons, to settle them in their Religion. By J. S. a Minister of the Church of England, a frequent Visitor of him during his whole Sicknes. Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry. Price 6 d.

\* \* The Compleat Library for December will also be Publish'd next Monday.

The Ladies Questions will be answer'd speedily.

L O N D O N, Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry, 1692.